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## Viewing cable 09ATHENS1265, Aegean Issues: Thoughts on CBMs, Preparing for Turkish

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Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
<a href="#">09ATHENS1265</a>	<a href="#">2009-07-17 14:29</a>	<a href="#">2011-08-30 01:44</a>	<a href="#">CONFIDENTIAL</a>	<a href="#">Embassy Athens</a>

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SUBJECT: Aegean Issues: Thoughts on CBMs, Preparing for Turkish  
Command of the CAOC

REF: BRYZA-SPECKHARD ET AL EMAIL 06/25/09

CLASSIFIED BY: Daniel V. Speckhard, Ambassador, State, US Embassy  
Athens; REASON: 1.4(A), (B), (D)

¶1. (C) Embassy Athens welcomes the interagency focus on Aegean issues reflected in the sub-IPC reported informally in ref. We recognize that it will be important for Greece to contribute to an improved atmosphere in the Aegean that can diffuse the tension and create an opportunity for more substantive negotiations to resolve longstanding disputes.

¶2. (C) We offer the following thoughts on possible CBMs that the Greeks could be encouraged to consider as part of a coordinated effort with Turkey to reduce tensions. We assess that doing these things could create an atmosphere that would permit the Greek and Turkish military establishments - and particularly the respective air forces-- to engage in productive discussions initially on air safety issues, but eventually with an eye for the two governments to manage their differences in the Aegean. While we will encourage the Greeks to avoid the "you first" trap to improving relations, we do believe that an observance by both sides of the normal summer suspension of military activity in the Aegean would be key in allowing them and Turks to halt the downward spiral and start on a new more positive footing in September. We also offer some background on Greek thinking in preparation for TUAf participation in the command of the Larissa CAOC.

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Possible CBMs:  
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¶2. (C) The following are possible confidence building measures that the Greeks could be encouraged to undertake in concert with reciprocal actions on the Turkish side to reduce tensions in Aegean and improve prospects for more substantial negotiations:

-- Indirect, but helpful for atmospherics:

- \* Recognize elected-Muftis in Thrace.
- \* MoD to vacate property proposed by GoG for Muslim Cemetery in Athens.
- \* GoG to publicly characterize the over-flights as "nuisance" rather than "threat to sovereignty."

-- Mil-Mil CBMs that have been in the works ( most Mil-Mil CBMs would likely need direct over flights of Greek islands to stop first):

- \* No longer "tag" as hostile TUAf planes flying in the Athens FIR.
- \* Invitation to TUAf chief to Greece/HAF visit to Turkey.
- \* HAF to refrain from overflying treaty demilitarized islands while under NATO designation.
- \* GoG and GoT to observe original intent of previously agreed CBMs such as the "summer moratorium" of flight/intercepts. In the event both sides don't observe, we should nevertheless press the GAF to unilaterally observe it as regards FIR "violations" (but not in cases of TUAf over flights of sovereign Greek territory).

-- Other Mil-Mil CBMs:

- \* GoG to refrain from planning NATO exercises over treaty demilitarized, or disputed, islands.
- \* Maintain 3 mi standoff when intercepting TUAf per existing ROE.
- \* Agreement to fly unarmed.
- \* GoG to refrain from hard-line responses such as deploying frigate to waters off Agathonisi
- \* GoG to quietly shelve any Interpol or other legal extradition requests in case of Turkish pilot convicted in accidental death of Greek pilot.

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Greeks on Larissa CAOC Command  
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13. (C) Our DAO has had a series of conversations with his GoG counterparts on the Larissa CAOC flag structure. The GoG expressed some chagrin at how the changes developed. They aver that the US proposed a changed flag structure for Larissa two days before the plan was decided at NATO, pulling the proposed US deputy commander in favor of a Turkish deputy, which the GoG did not veto "under duress." As a result, in Larissa both the commander and deputy will now rotate between Greek and Turk, always having a Turk in some command role. This is not "balanced" in Component Command Air (CC Air) Izmir where the commander is US but the deputy rotates between Turk and third country. It is only at Chief of Staff level where a Greek is in the normal rotation, leaving six months per year when no Greek is in any command role in Izmir. This is being played in the press as a big loss to the GoG, which is trying to redress in part by placing Greek officers elsewhere. With the above in mind, as we counsel the Greeks and Turks on preparing for a Turkish command role in Larissa, we should think creatively about how to offer the Greeks additional visibility elsewhere in the region. One option might be adding Greek Colonels to RC South (Naples) or to SHAPE. In addition, we must encourage the GAF and TUAf to meet, and perhaps exchange officers in preparation for the CAOC change. Finally, we should press the respective air force commanders to meet, once we are able to point to a hiatus in over flights of Greek-inhabited islands by the TUAf.  
SPECKHARD